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FARRELL THERESA C 12/23/81 124220 PRINTER: LI
79 KABUL 7876

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ACTION NEA-11
INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-06
H-01 INR-12 L-03 NSAF-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SES-01 /089 W
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P R 060942Z NOV 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6194
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BEIJING
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
CINCPAC

*Religion & Amin
(getting copy, trying
to use it)*

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAL
E.O.12065: GDS 11-6-85 (FLATIN, BRUCE A.) OR-M
TAGS: PINT PINR PGOV SEUM AF
SUBJ: (C) AFGHANISTAN'S AMIN AND ISLAM

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT.)
2. SUMMARY: IRONICALLY ENJOYING THE MUSLIM EQUIVALENT OF
THE "DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS" AUTHORITY, MARXIST-LENINIST
STRONGMAN HAFIZULLAH AMIN IS CURRENTLY AVOIDING WITH CARE
ANY CONFRONTATION WITH ISLAM IN AFGHANISTAN. THE KHALQIS
APPEAR TO BE SATISFIED TO CONCENTRATE ON PROPAGANDIZING
THE NATION'S YOUTH, AND TO AWAIT PATIENTLY THE GRADUAL
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DIMINISHMENT OF ISLAM'S ROLE IN THIS SOCIETY. END OF SUMMARY.
3. SINCE HE OVERTHEW FORMER PRESIDENT TARAKI IN MID-SEPTEMBER.
AFGHANISTAN'S STRONGMAN, HAFIZULLAH AMIN, HAS MADE A CON-
CERTED EFFORT TO APPEASE THE CONSERVATIVE ISLAMIC ELEMENTS
OF THIS TRADITIONALISTIC SOCIETY. AMIN HAS, FOR
EXAMPLE,
ORDERED THAT SEVERAL MOSQUES THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN BE "RE-
PAIRED AND WHITWASHED" (THIS PROJECT IS UNDERFUNDED, HOW-
EVER, AND NO RESULTS ARE DISCERNIBLE LOCALLY). HE ALSO HAS
PRESIDED WITH STUDIOUS EIGNITY AT IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS EVENTS,
SUCH AS THE RECENTLY
CONCLUDED ID-UL-AZHA SERVICES. HIS
GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA CONSTANTLY REPEAT THE REFRAIN:
"THE GREAT KHALQI REVOLUTION IS TOTALLY BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES
OF ISLAM". AN EXAMPLE CITED OFTEN BY THE KHALQIS IS

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THEIR ELIMINATION OF USURY IN AGRICULTURAL CREDIT.

4. AMIN HAS ALSO ARRANGED TO HAVE A TAME GROUP OF RELIGIOUS FIGURES CONSTITUTE A "JAMIAT-I-ULAMA" (RELIGIOUS COUNCIL) AND DECLARE HIM "OLELAMAR" OF AFGHANISTAN. AN "OLELAMAR" IS A SECULAR LEADER WHO RULES THROUGH THE AUTHORITY OF ALLAH (A SIMILAR "ULAMA" GROUP HAD SO DESIGNATED TARAKI SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEMISE). ACCORDING TO THE REMARKABLE DECLARATION OF THE "JAMIAT-I-ULAMA," SUBSEQUENTLY "APPROVED WITH ENTHUSIASM" BY PROVINCIAL "ULAMAS" THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN, AMIN'S DECREES MUST BE OBEYED AS "FARZ" -- COMMANDS WHICH HAVE THE FORCE OF DIVINE SANCTION. FAILURE TO OBEY THE "OLELAMAR" CAN RESULT IN THE DEATH PENALTY, A POINT REPEATED FREQUENTLY BY THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AFGHAN MEDIA. THIS "ULAMA" DECISION, IN ESSENCE, IS ROUGHLY SIMILAR TO THE "DIVINE

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RIGHT OF KINGS" DOCTRINE PROMOTED IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE.

5. IN DECLARING AMIN "OLELAMAR," THE "ULAMA" NOTED THAT HE HAD BEEN "BORN A MUSLIM, OF MUSLIM PARENTS". THIS LIMITED FORMULATION GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT THE REGIME IS AVOIDING A COMMITMENT ON THE PRESENT-TENSE SITUATION: IS AMIN NOW A MUSLIM? FOR SOME REASON THE KHALQI LEADER SEEMS UNABLE TO DECLARE SIMPLY, LIKE THE MAJORITY OF HIS COUNTRYMEN: "I AM A MUSLIM." PERHAPS HE IS STILL SUPERSTITIOUS ENOUGH, IN SPITE OF HIS MODERN MARXIST-LENINIST SOPHISTICATION, TO FEAR THAT HE WILL BE STRUCK DEAD IF HE UTTERS THIS PHRASE FALSELY. AMIN INSTEAD LIMITS HIS RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT TO: "I RESPECT ISLAM". THIS DOES NOT, HOWEVER, INHIBIT HIS CHANTING PRAYERS ROUTINELY ON IMPORTANT PUBLIC OCCASIONS, SUCH AS, ALREADY NOTED, AT THE RECENT ID SERVICES.

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6. IN SPITE OF THE OBVIOUSLY LUKEWARM RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS. IF ANY, OF AMIN AND OTHERS IN THE KHALQI LEADERSHIP (SEVERAL OF WHOM, FOR EXAMPLE, ESCHUEW USE OF THE CUSTOMARY RELIGIOUS PHRASES OF GREETING AND FAREWELL), IT IS NOT ACCURATE TO TERM THEM HOSTILE TO ISLAM AT THIS PARTICULAR STAGE OF THEIR REVOLUTION. ALTHOUGH ANTI-REGIME ELEMENTS HAVE DISSEMINATED WIDESPREAD PROPAGANDA ABOUT THE ANTI-ISLAMIC CHARACTER OF THE KHALQIS, THE LATTER HAVE NOT, AS YET, HINDERED AFGHANS FROM PRACTICING THEIR RELIGION FAIRLY FREELY, AS THE KHALQIS ARE SO FOND OF SAYING, "NO MOSQUES HAVE BEEN BURNED IN AFGHANISTAN". (THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DO AT ANY

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RATE, BECAUSE THEY ARE USUALLY MADE OF ADOBE MUD.)

4. AN IMPORTANT KHALQI THEORIST ONCE FRANKLY TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER: "WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO A MULLAH'S BEING ENGAGED EXCLUSIVELY IN THE FIELD OF THEOLOGY; IF, HOWEVER, A MULLAH WERE TO INTERFERE IN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, OR SOCIAL AREAS, WE WOULD HAVE TO SMASH HIM". THIS VIEW WAS FURTHER REFLECTED IN AN OCTOBER 21 EDITORIAL IN THE OFFICIAL KABUL TIMES, WHICH STATED ITS PREFERENCE FOR "ENLIGHTENED MULLAHS, THAT IS MULLAHS WHO THINK OBJECTIVELY AND SEE THINGS OBJECTIVELY." THE SEI'A CLERGY OF AFGHANISTAN, WHO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEY OWE ALLEGIANCE TO IRAN'S AYATOLLAH KHOMENI, A SWORN ENEMY OF THE KHALQI REGIME, ARE WATCHED ESPECIALLY CLOSELY IN THIS REGARD.

8. IT HAS BEEN THE GENERAL OBSERVATION OF EMBASSY OFFICERS

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THAT YOUNG SCHOOL-AGE AFGHANS, WHO ARE NOW UNDER THE THOROUGH-
GOING CONTROL AND TRAINING OF THE KHALQIS, ARE BEING DIS-
CREETLY STEERED AWAY FROM THE DEEP RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT OF
THEIR ELDERS. THE LOCAL MULLAHS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES ARE
FREQUENTLY TOO COWED AND TIMID TO CONFRONT EFFECTIVELY THIS
"CREEPING SECULARIZATION" STRATEGY. THE PARENTS FREQUENTLY
FOLLOW THE LEAD OF THE MULLAHS.

9. COMMENT: AMIN AND HIS COHORTS, PRESUMABLY UNDER SOVIET
ADVICE, CLEARLY INTEND TO AVOID ANY UNNECESSARY HEAD-ON
CONFRONTATIONS WITH ISLAM AT THIS EARLY AND VULNERABLE STAGE
OF THE KHALQI REVOLUTION. AS THE DEEPLY DEVOUT OLDER
GENERATIONS DIE (THE AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY IN THIS
COUNTRY IS ONLY FORTY), HOWEVER, THE RISING RANKS OF
AFGHAN YOUTH, CONTAINING MANY AMBITIOUS FOR JOBS AND
STATUS, WILL PROBABLY COME TO REGARD RELIGION IN A DISIN-
TERESTED FASHION NOT TOO UNLIKE THAT OF THEIR COUNTER-

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PARTS IN NEIGHBORING REPUBLICS OF SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA.
THE FAITH HERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE EQUIPPED TO CONTEND
WITH THIS CHALLENGE. AFGHANISTAN'S SUNNI ISLAM, FRAG-
MENTED INTO COMPLEX GEOGRAPHIC AND ETHNIC PATTERNS, LACKS
A COHESIVE AND NATIONWIDE STRUCTURE LIKE THAT OF KEOAUB TOYES SHIZAIS #

IN NEIGHBORING IRAN. THE SOME FIFTEEN
PERCENT OF THE AFGHANS WHO ARE SHI'A HAVE RECEIVED, THUS
FAR, LITTLE MORE THAN MORAL SUPPORT FROM THEIR CORELI-
GIONISTS TO THE WEST.

10 IF THE KHALQI REGIME SURVIVES, THE FUTURE LOOKS
BLEAK FOR ISLAM. ALTHOUGH IT IS UNLIKELY TO EXPIRE
AS A FAITH HERE, ISLAM EVENTUALLY WILL NO LONGER BE
PERMITTED TO DOMINATE THE ENTIRE FABRIC OF SOCIETY, AS
IT HAS FOR CENTURIES.

BLOOD

NOTE BY OC/T: KABUL 7876/2. #PARA 9 AS RECEIVED.
CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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